SECOND COMING REVELATIONS

X-FACTOR

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Previously...

With the members of their race slowly dying out and no new mutants being born, mutantkind was on the brink of extinction. In need of a miracle, the X-Men were elated when one came in the form of Hope—a newborn mutant who held the promise of repopulation. Under attack by those who would see mutantkind extinguished, the X-Men sent the infant into the future with one of their own, Cable, to be raised under his protection and one day return to the present.

Now Cable and Hope have returned to the present. But the X-Men were not the only ones awaiting their return: Bastion, a super-Sentinel from the future hell-bent on exterminating all mutants, has used an alien virus to revive many of the X-Men's enemies, including the creator of Sentinel technology, Bolivar Trask. The virus allows Bastion to control those he reanimates but the minds of the undead remain intact, leading them in some cases to fight back against his control. But Bastion's hold is too strong and the members of his cabal are seemingly unable to free themselves from his influence. Now Bastion and his undead cabal are in pursuit of Cable and Hope in an effort to seal mutantkind's fate once and for all.

Elsewhere, the Mutant Response Division, headed up by Bolivar Trask, has targeted X-Factor for elimination. Thus far it hasn't gone particularly well as the team has outmaneuvered and escaped them on all fronts: The core team in New York; Guido and Monet in South America; and Layla, Shatterstar and Banshee in Ireland. The reason for Trask's failures is due in part to the fact that his heart isn't in the mission at hand and Trask is fighting Bastion's control. Bastion, aware of Trask's attempts to free himself, continues to assert his presence and orders Trask to annihilate X-Factor for good...

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COLONEL MORAN, SIR! YOU'RE BACK!
WE'VE BEEN MAINTAINING SURVEILLANCE AS--
WE'RE GOING IN.
READY FLASH BANGS, READY GAS CANISTERS. MUTANTS OR NO, THEY HAVE TO SEE AND THEY HAVE TO BREATHE. MAKE SURE THEY DO NEITHER.
GO TIME IS NINETY SECONDS FROM...
"...NOW!"
FLASH BANGS DEPLOYED! LAUNCHING GAS CANISTERS!
PREPARE TO ENTER PREMISES IN TEN SECONDS!

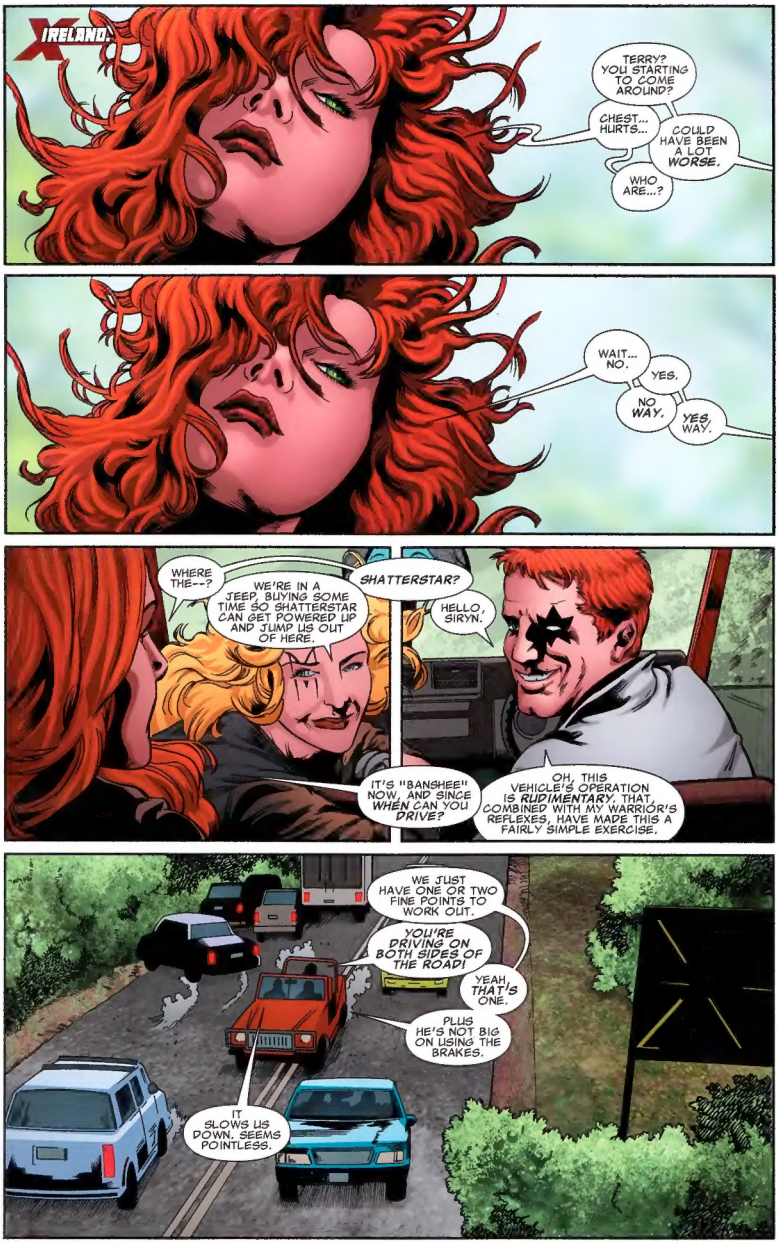
GO! GO! GO!
GIVE ME A SITREP, COLONEL.
WHAT'S GOING ON IN THERE?
CLEAR!
CLEAR! NO SIGN OF THEM!
MR. TRASK, WE'RE GETTING CLEAR REPORTS FROM ALL OVER.
THEY'RE NOT HERE.
THEN WE TAKE TO THE STREETS, COLONEL.
USE DNA DETECTORS. GO AVENUE TO AVENUE, BLOCK TO BLOCK--DOOR TO DOOR, IF YOU HAVE TO.
SIR, I THOUGHT WE WERE TRYING TO KEEP A LOW-PROFILE INSOFAR AS THE PUBLIC IS--
NOT ANYMORE. WE'RE DONE SCREWING AROUND.

SOUTH AMERICA
THAT'S A POSITIVE. LOCATORS INDICATE MUTANT TARGETS ARE INSIDE THE STRUCTURE.
COPY THAT. PULL YOUR TROOPS BACK IN PREPARATION FOR AIR ASSAULT IN TWO MINUTES. OVER.
COPY THAT, PULLING BACK. OVER.
M.P.D
FALL BACK! EVERYBODY, FALL BACK!
THIS PLACE IS GOING TO BE SCORCHED EARTH DAMNED QUICK!
"NOTHING IN THERE GETS OUT ALIVE."
YA REALIZE THEY'RE PROBABLY GONNA NUKE US FROM ORBIT. IT'S THE ONLY WAY T'BE SURE.
YOU'RE A MAGIC USER, MORDO, CAN YOU... I DON'T KNOW... "POOF!" US OUT OF HERE?
CHILD'S PLAY FOR ONE SUCH AS I...
...SAVE THAT IT WILL USE UP THE LAST OF THE ENERGY THAT I...
...stole... from me...?
HONEY?
M?

YOU... VAMPIRE...
I SHOULD TEAR YOU APART...WITH MY BARE HANDS...
DO YOU THINK I'M PROUD OF MY ACTIONS?
USING YOU LIKE A PARASITE, TO SECURE THE ENERGIES NEEDED TO CURE MY CANCER?
ENERGIES I HAD TO EXPEND ON MINISTERING TO THE WOUNDS THOSE SAVAGES INFLICTED UPON ME?
AM I SUPPOSED TO FEEL SORRY FOR YOU?
I DON'T CARE HOW YOU--
BARON!
I'M HEARING ACTIVITY OUTSIDE! I...I THINK THE LARGE FREAK IS RIGHT.
THEY'RE PREPARING AN AIR STRIKE!

LET ME TAKE FROM YOU WHAT I NEED TO CURE MYSELF PERMANENTLY, AND I WILL GET US TO SAFETY.
TO HELL WITH THAT. YOU'D VANISH AND LEAVE US HERE.
GET US BACK TO NEW YORK...TO X-FACTOR..AND *THEN* YOU CAN TAKE WHAT YOU NEED.
WHAT--?
MONET, YOU CAN'T *WILLINGLY* GIVE YOURSELF TO--
DAD, I *LOVE* YOU...I *RESPECT* YOU...BUT I KINDA NEED YOU TO SHUT THE HELL UP NOW.
HOW DO I KNOW THAT YOU'LL KEEP YOUR WORD?
FOR STARTERS, I'M NOT EVIL, UNLIKE *SOME* PEOPLE.
TAKE MY FRIENDS AND ME TO X-FACTOR SAFE AND SOUND, AND I'M YOURS. I SWEAR.
YOU DRIVE A HARD BARGAIN, MISS ST. CROIX.

PACKAGE IS RELEASED.
BY THE FLAMES OF FALTINE, BY THE NAMES NONE CAN ABIDE, REMOVE US FROM HERE TO X-FACTOR, WHEREVER THEY MAY HIDE.
UHM... BARON?
MY LORD? WHAT, UHM...
WHAT ABOUT US? WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO--?
BLAM


X IRELAND
TERRY? YOU STARTING TO COME AROUND?
CHEST... HURTS...
COULD HAVE BEEN A LOT WORSE.
WHO ARE...?
WAIT... NO.
YES.
NO WAY.
YES, WAY.
WHERE THE--?
WE'RE IN A JEEP, BUYING SOME TIME SO SHATTERSTAR CAN GET POWERED UP AND JUMP US OUT OF HERE.
SHATTERSTAR?
HELLO, SIRYN.
IT'S "BANSHEE" NOW, AND SINCE WHEN CAN YOU DRIVE?
OH, THIS VEHICLE'S OPERATION IS RUDIMENTARY. THAT, COMBINED WITH MY WARRIOR'S REFLEXES, HAVE MADE THIS A FAIRLY SIMPLE EXERCISE.
WE JUST HAVE ONE OR TWO FINE POINTS TO WORK OUT.
YOU'RE DRIVING ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ROAD!
YEAH, THAT'S ONE.
PLUS HE'S NOT BIG ON USING THE BRAKES.
IT SLOWS US DOWN. SEEMS POINTLESS.

UP AHEAD!
I SEE IT.
BUT THERE'S A--
HE SEES IT.
I THINK THEY WANT THEIR STOLEN VEHICLE BACK.
LAYLA, TAKE THE WHEEL.
YOU KNOW WHERE YOU WANT TO GO?
YUP.
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING--?!
DON'T WORRY. WE'RE PROFESSIONALS.
READY! AIM!

HOLY MOTHER OF--!
FIRE!
RAKOVLAAAAM
"YOU CAN'T JUST DROP A MILITARY OPERATION INTO THE MIDDLE OF MY PRECINCT!"

WHO DO YOU PEOPLE THINK YOU ARE!
OUR CREDENTIALS COME FROM THE UNITED NATIONS, SERGEANT. YOU HAVE AN ISSUE? TAKE IT UP WITH THEM.
THE CHAIRMAN OF THE U.N. AIN'T HERE, SO I'M TAKING IT UP WITH YOU.
SECRETARY-GENERAL. AND YOU'VE BEEN HARBORING MUTANT FREAKS IN YOUR PRECINCT, SERGEANT, SO--
SO WHAT? THIS IS NEW YORK. YOU SHOULD SEE THE FREAKS WE GOT DRIVING CABS.
THERE IS NO GREATER THREAT--
--TO YOUR CITY'S SECURITY THAN MUTANTS, SERGEANT. NEW YORKERS SHOULD BE PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO SUCH CONSIDERA--
SIR. WE'VE GOT A LOCATION.
IS THIS FIRM?
OUR SCOUTS HAVE A DEFINITE DNA LOCK. WAREHOUSE BY THE WATERFRONT. LOCATION'S BEEN FED INTO YOUR VEHICLE'S GUIDANCE SYSTEM.
WHERE THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING!?
SIR, I'M STILL NOT SANGUINE ABOUT YOUR DIRECT PARTICIPATION.
IS THE DREAD-X INVINCIBLE OR IS IT NOT, COLONEL?
I HAVE EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT--
ALL RIGHT, THEN. LET'S ROLL.

BACKUP WILL BE HERE ANY MINUTE, SARGE.
GOOD. GET THE MAYOR'S OFFICE ON THE HORN. TELL THEM IT'S TIME TO SET THOSE U.N. LOONS STRAIGHT.
NO ONE RUNS OVER ME IN MY OWN--
SARGE!
HOLY--!
"WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU DON'T HAVE A PLAN?"
KRUNCH

YOU CREATED THIS "SAFEHOUSE" AS A BACKUP SHOULD SOMETHING LIKE THIS OCCUR.
IF YOU ANTICIPATED THIS EVENTUALITY, MADROX, THEN YOU *MUST* HAVE PLANNED FOR WHAT HAPPENED NEXT.
YEAH, RICTOR, YOU'D *THINK* THAT, WOULDN'T YOU.
SO WE GOT NOTHING IS WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.
I DIDN'T THINK WE'D BE *DOWN* HALF THE TEAM!
BUT WHAT IF THE MRD TRACKS US HERE!
DON'T WORRY, QUALITY, *NOT* QUANTITY, IS WHAT'S IMPORTANT.
OH, SO SAYS *LUCK BOY*.
SO SAY I, YES.
WELL, WHY DON'T YOU TURN THAT LUCK OF YOURS TO GETTING US SOME *REINFORCEMENTS*?
NOW WHAT--?!
FALL BACK! GET READY FOR--!

HOLY--!
LINNHHH...
WHOA!
BRAKE! BRAKE! NOW WOULD BE A GOOD TIME TO--
KRASH
ANY OTHER REQUESTS?

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, MONET?
FINE, DAD. I'M FINE. GETTING STRONGER EVERY SECOND.
MONET! HOW DID YOU--? WHO'S THAT GUY?
THAT'S MORDO. HE KIDNAPPED MONET'S DAD SO THAT HE COULD CAPTURE M AND SUCK ENERGY FROM HER...
HE TRIED... TO HURT MONET...?
HOLD UP, SLUGGER!
LEMME GO!
FER CRYIN' OUT LOUD, DARWIN, HE'S OUT COLD!
GOOD! HE'LL BE EASIER TO KILL THAT WAY!
I APPRECIATE YOUR DESIRE TO WELCOME ME HOME BY KILLING A HELPLESS MAN, DARWIN, BUT HE AND I HAD A DEAL.
I TAKE MY PROMISES SERIOUSLY.
YOU AIN'T GONNA STICK WITH THAT, ARE YA--?
NO WAY! NO FREAKIN' WAY ARE--
KRAKAAM
OH, YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING.

ATTENTION, X-FACTOR! COME OUT IMMEDIATELY AND SPARE YOURSELF UNNECESSARY CONFLICT! A CONFLICT THAT YOU WILL CERTAINLY LOSE!
WE HAVE THE SUPERIOR WEAPONS... THE SUPERIOR FIREPOWER... THE SUPERIOR NUMBERS...
OH YEAH? COUNT AGAIN!
WHEN FACED WITH AN OVERWHELMING THREAT, THE DUPES MANAGE TO SET ASIDE THEIR DIFFERENCES AND PERSONALITY CLASHES AND OPERATE AS ONE.
AS IT TURNS OUT, THE SAME CAN BE SAID FOR THE REST OF THE TEAM AS WELL.

SKRAEEEE
THERE'S TERRY, CREATING A WALL OF SOUND TO ACT AS A BLIFFER...

...AND GUIDO AND SHATTERSTAR, BACK-TO-BACK, TAKING ON ALL COMERS.
AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME, I THINK, "WOW. MAYBE THIS CAN REALLY WORK. MAYBE WE CAN MAKE IT WORK."

AND THEN I FEEL MY DUPES DYING BY THE DOZEN, GUNNED DOWN BY THAT GIANT WALKING TANK, AND IT'S LIKE A THOUSAND NEEDLES BEING JAMMED INTO MY MIND...
...AND SUDDENLY NOTHING SEEMS LIKE IT'LL WORK, EVER AGAIN.

LAYLA!!!
LAYLA, NO!!! MONET, DO SOMETHING! SAVE H--
SPLA AANG
WOW. OKAY. UH... THAT'S NEW.

MONET...UP THERE, TRASK. GET INTO HIS HEAD.
HE'LL TAKE IT FROM THERE.
WHAT DO YOU--?
JUST DO IT.
NOW THAT SHE'S GROWN UP, I'LL FEEL WAY LESS GUILTY ABOUT KICKING HER ASS.
TRASK!!!
TIME TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER BETTER!
SHOOT HER, TRASK. DO NOT ALLOW HER TO--

MUTANT CEREBRAL INFESTATION.
UNACCEPTABLE.
OH MY GOD...
WHAT... WHAT WAS THAT IN--?
QUICKLY... QUICKLY...
THIS IS TRASK. ALL TROOPS, STAND DOWN. MISSION OVER. REPEAT, MISSION OVER...
WH- WHAT?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING--?!?
HE'LL BE BACK IN CHARGE ANY SECOND. I'M SORRY. NO TIME--
GOD BLESS YOU.
WAIT--!
BLAAAAM

COLONEL! TRASK SAID THE MISSION WAS OVER--!
LIKE HELL! LIKE HELL IT IS! IT'S NOT OVER UNTIL I SAY--
--it's over...?
KRAKK

YOU HEARD THE MAN.
IT'S OVER.
YOU KEEP TELLING YOURSELF THAT, MUTANT.
JUST KEEP TELLING YOURSELF THAT.
I SURE WILL.
NO.
WE WILL.
REALLY?
REALLY.
I LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT.
WATCH THE FINGER. IT'S STILL A LITTLE SORE.
OH, SHUT UP, MADROX.

NEXT